

Anthropology

"In the future I see open fields for far more important researches... Much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history." - On the Origin of Species



Illustration by Nicolle Rager Fuller, National Science Foundation

With one, single sentence in "On the Origin of Species," Charles Darwin created a firestorm of debate by implying that humans evolved from animals. He wrote: Much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history. But it was later, when German biologist Ernst Haeckel revealed a hypothetical human family tree in 1868 using 'Origin's' principles of evolution that Darwin countered with "The Descent of Man" in 1871. In it he overtly said, "The conclusion that man is the co-descendant with other species of some ancient, lower and extinct form is not in any degree new." Since then, the human family tree has been modified again and again with some startling twists and turns.